

Abstract. There has been scant investigation about workplace spirituality focusing on organizational level. Thus, this paper tries to fulfill this gap by recognizing that organizations have been increasingly forced to address other issues than their traditional concerns. Rather, it suggests that companies should be open to embrace other values such as spiritual principles through organizational re-orientation. Accordingly, this paper presents the case study of Serasa Experian, one of the world's leading economic and financial analysis and information firms. In addition, it proposes a simplified conceptual framework in which both corporate social responsibility (CSR) and internal marketing concept (IMC) constitute the key constructs of a spiritual organization. Finally, the findings suggest that Serasa Experian has pursued an organizational spirituality orientation, yet it has somewhat lost its impetus toward it. Overall, evidence shows that its features, values, and feats are typical of an organization in which spirituality is more than a word, even though it is unaware of it.

Keywords: corporate culture, corporate social responsibility, employees, internal marketing, virtues, workplace spirituality.

PURSuing ORGANIZATIONAL SPIRITUALITY: SOME LESSONS FROM A FINANCIAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Anselmo Ferreira VASCONCELOS

*Rua Fradique Coutinho, 587 – apto. 31 D
CEP 05416-010, São Paulo, SP, Brazil.
e-mail: afv@uol.com.br*

*Management & Marketing
Challenges for the Knowledge Society
(2011) Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 365-392*

1. Introduction

In this first decade of a new millennium, it seems that organizations are starting to focus on more than just materialist upshots. Rather, the growing societal issues and complex demands have prompted organizations to handle with other emerging themes and workplace spirituality one of them. Although this topic can be seen under different ways and lens, it has prevailed two different, but complementary approaches, that is, the individual and the organizational one. The former involves the need of conciliation between people spiritual life and their workplaces demands whereas the latter encompasses the organizations' concerns with the improvement of productivity through spirituality (Garcia-Zamor, 2003a, p. 329). However, there are some researchers that argue that the simple lack of workplace spirituality could result in negative consequences for organizations and individuals (e.g., Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). Further, there is an assumption that both workplace and changing societal values will continue to give rise to conflicts that demand "inner space" solutions (Guillory, 2001, p. 40).

As a result, self-aware organizational leaders have apparently understood the dramatic change of values that are taking place in people's minds. As these transformations have spilled over organizations, they have also been forced to change their traditional roles. Accordingly, one may surmise that, at the organizational level, the simple task of producing and delivering products and/or services are not sufficient. On the face of it, this paper intends to make a profile of a Brazilian organization and answer whether it is pursuing an organizational spirituality orientation. Researchers have adequately examined individuals' perceptions, beliefs, and opinions about the spiritual theme (e.g., Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004; Camkin, 2008; Chamiec-Case, 2006; Houston & Cartwright, 2007; Issa & Pick, 2010a-b, 2011; Karakas, 2009, 2010; Kolodinsky et al., 2008; Marques 2006a, b; Marques et al., 2007; Marschke, 2008; Milliman et al., 2003; Mitroff, 1999a-b; Moore & Casper, 2006; Pin et al., 2010; Rego et al., 2007; Rego & Cunha, 2008; Souto & Rego, 2006; Vasconcelos, 2010) and strived to conceptualize its effectiveness at the group level (e.g., Daniel, 2010). However, there has been scant investigation focused on the organizational level (e.g., Milliman et al, 1999; Pavlovich & Corner, 2009; Quatro, 2002). As a consequence, there remains the challenge of finding how firms implement authentic workplace spirituality (Milliman et al., 2003). In addition, it is extremely important to conduct and publish research on spirituality in organizations (Neal & Biberman, 2004) whether one regards that these places need to be significantly ameliorated. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the knowledge of this field particularly at the organizational level.

To follow through that aim, it outlines the major problems that organizations have been faced in dealing with so complex a topic. Secondly, it discusses the corporate culture construct as a logical path whereby firms could integrate both spiritual and humanistic concerns. Thirdly, it examines the different perspectives whereby firms are seeing the spiritual topic inside their structures. Fourthly, it presents a synthesis of how spiritual practices are taking place in organizational settings, as

well as a conceptual framework in which both corporate social responsibility (CSR) and internal marketing concept (IMC) constitute the key constructs of a spiritual organization. Finally, it explores the case study of Serasa Experian discusses other relevant issues and presents the concluding remarks.

2. Some difficulties and challenges about spirituality in organizations

Discussing the difficulties and challenges that firms face to understand the spiritual quest, Howard (2002, p. 241) wisely notes: “We are still at the early stages of exploring just how organizations may become more spiritual, and what benefits or conflicts this might create”. In a related manner, Jurkiewicz & Giacalone (2004) found no evidence of organizations attempting to embrace spiritual topic. Presumably, this effort means a daunting task (Ingersoll 2003), which the majority of organizations are still not ready to cope with. Worse still, it may be occurring because firms do not know how to integrate both material values and spiritual ones. Although this difficulty may be surpassed, “The heavy emphasis on spiritual values and a spiritual infrastructure, however, does not allow for less than high-performance” (Mitroff & Denton, 1999a, p. 96). In reality, organizations do not need to refrain from doing their corporate duties nor eschewing from harsh decisions for the sake of spiritual tenets.

According to Lawler (2003), there are firms fueled by either spiritual purposes or just by business ones. Nonetheless, wiser organizations have chosen to follow another path by embracing both spiritual and business goals. Rather, by focusing on spiritual tenets (i.e., the nobler purposes) the task of setting goals is substantially eased. At the same time, it works like a gimmick to motivate and retain talented employees and therein lies a good reason for firms embrace this topic. Bearing it in mind, Garcia-Zamor (2003b, p. 361) ponders that firms also need to establish themselves as worthy ones, that is, organizations with a higher sense of business purpose. This argument implicitly addresses the need of reconciling both economic value and ethical or spiritual value, a sensitive matter raised by Pauchant (2002). In this sense, scholars have argued that it is our responsibility “to build organizations that help build people’s spirit, not destroy them” (Pfeffer, 2003, p. 31). Similarly, Shipka (1997) suggested that we need to feed ourselves through spiritual food (i.e., spirituality at work in this case) because is vital to our survival. At this juncture, one may infer that organizations that are inspired by spiritual concerns are those interested in more than just profit and financial returns. Actually, they seem to be a sort of organization willing to go a step ahead. Taken together, these arguments encapsulate the notion of workplace spirituality at the organizational level.

3. Spiritual corporate culture

In this section, I discuss the importance of corporate culture as a natural path whereby spiritual and humanistic concerns may be explored. Thus, it is worth remembering that corporate culture is a by-product of the deeply held values and

beliefs shared by the members of an organization. As such, corporate culture guides organizational mission and values and by probing them one can find what sort of purpose it pursues. As for the spiritual approach, it may likely flourish in organizational settings where the leaderships are searching for (1) the betterment of society and (2) caring about other things than just economic value. In other words, workplace spirituality apparently derives from work settings where employees may express feelings of an inner life, sense of community, and are committed to meaningful work (cf., Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

Similarly, Garcia-Zamor (2003a, pp. 331-332) states that there has been sizeable empirical evidence supporting that workplace spirituality creates a new kind of corporate culture in which employees feel happier and are encouraged to perform better. The simple fact that they belong to a work community - other crucial aspect of workplace spirituality - may make them to feel good even when things will not be good in the future. According to this author, a corporate culture that is grounded in sharing and caring practices or, stated differently, where a humanistic work environment is supported, employees show more creative skills and higher morale by delivering superior organizational performance. Jurkiewicz & Giacalone (2004), in turn, suggest that organizations that show high levels of workplace spirituality will most likely exhibit positive effects on employee motivation.

Overall, the literature suggests that workplace spirituality can be an overarching organizational achievement. Nonetheless, millions of organizations around the planet are usually encouraged only by economic values. Obviously, in these organizational settings, one should first seed humanistic values in both the processes and the relationships as so to build a spiritual values organizational mindset. Lawler (1986, as cited in Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004, pp. 132-133) asserted that such an initiative could take employees to attain their personal growth and to be more productive than those that are working for firms that behave otherwise.

Therefore, I propose that a spiritual corporate culture comes true when it is fueled with humanistic values such as acts of generosity, caring, goodness, gratitude, recognition, and respect, among other ones. When organizations integrate such virtuous and qualities into their daily operations, organizational leaderships, structures, strategies, products, and services will likely mirror a brighter face to the world. Actually, I posit that such an organizational face constitutes what most of us have indeed wanted. On the other hand, one of the most relevant manifestations of workplace spirituality has to do with ethical issues.

4. Spiritual view within organizations

Research has highlighted many positive aspects related to workplace spirituality whereby both organizations and individuals are benefited. For example, "...when one speaks about bringing spirituality into the workplace, he or she is talking about changing organizational culture by transforming leadership and employees so that humanistic practices and policies become an integral part of an organization's

Pursuing organizational spirituality: some lessons from a financial services corporation

day-to-day function” (Garcia-Zamor, 2003b, p. 360). Similarly, Mitroff (2002) posits that executives, managers, and workers are engaged in putting into practice some spiritual and ethical principles in their activities.

Obviously, many companies are uncomfortable with the perspective of having to cope with so deep transformations. Otherwise, workers would have just par excellence organizations to work for. In fact, today’s workplaces tend to be disturbing for many reasons, especially because of the organizations’ narrower or dispirited business purposes. Nonetheless, companies have increasingly been pressured by society as a whole to pursue not only economic interests. In this regard, companies that have ever accepted a spiritual framework may have realized that it contributes to a healthy work environment (Ingersoll, 2003, p. 292). Pfeffer (2003) has expressed similar conclusion when he refers to those firms that treat their people with dignity and respect, not simply as economic agents or factors of production. Taken together, it is clear that there is a more ample understanding of workplace spirituality in relation to individuals’ perspective at work.

In contrast, some researchers have posited compelling views about spiritual principles within companies encompassing, more specifically, the organizational perspective (e.g., Biberman, 2009; Biberman & Whitty, 1997). They postulate that companies, which are favorable to the core ideas that have been discussed here, disapprove the notion of self-preservation at all costs. These authors have also proposed that such firms would be more supportive of the ecology and environment issues, as well as more concerned with meeting the needs of internal and external customers. At the same time, those companies tend to be run in such a way that creative thinking and synergies, among organizational units, are strongly encouraged in order to accomplish their mission statements and goals.

On the other hand, if spirituality topic cannot hold an organization, as suggested by Ashforth & Pratt (2003, p. 95), it can help at least to change the current mindset by facing the negative perceptions of certain groups which advocate that firms should be only profit-driven. Admittedly, the pursuit of profit remains as the main organizations’ goal and, on the surface, there has been no clear signs of shifting it, even in the long-run. However, I argue that the tangible and intangible assets (i.e., both profit and spiritual ones) can be built together. In this sense, an authentic example of how such an organizational transformation may be feasible has been given by Ouimet-Tomasso Inc. by means of its thoughtful “Our Project”. This company has put into practice innovative management tools supported by responsible principles and basic values (Ouimet, 2002). On the face of it, I surmise that in the future there will be only organizations undergirded by spiritual principles. I also posit that, under this frame, they will likely not abstain from their traditional responsibilities and accountabilities. Presumably, it may enable a scenario made up of organizations that do not put themselves first (Gull & Doh, 2004).

Put differently, companies in which “The standard for corporate conduct can be raised from ‘do not harm’ to ‘do lots of good’” (Kanter, 2008, p. 283). Therefore, I suggest that the spiritual tenets will increasingly influence organizations’ boards of

directors and managerial decision making processes in a manner that *the tangible outputs* will echo a new business orientation. In doing so, firms will not take risk of tainting their images and reputations for the sake of some kind of misbehavior. Thus, the next section examines how firms are dealing with the phenomenon of spirituality in organizational settings and how it is taking place in such environments.

5. Corporate acts and practices inspired on spiritual orientation

First of all, I believe that corporate spiritual orientation to be validated must be expressed in terms of tangible contributions to the society as a whole. Therefore, it requires plenty of benign organizational practices and acts toward the well-being of customers, employees, environment, and the planet likewise. In fact, I think that the genuine view of workplace spirituality, at the organizational level, is encapsulated by the accomplishment of societal duties. In a nutshell, organizations must show strong commitment to doing *good*. In effect, companies have the opportunity to do good by employing their capabilities and knowledge in order to serve the humankind instead of being served by the human beings.

In this sense, the applied spirituality in the workplace presupposes principled behavior and moral compass shaping the whole organization. And such a blueprint can be noted when some aspects are clearly identifiable. More specifically, when "...virtues, ethics, emotions, and intuition are part of the organization's behavior and policies" (Ashar & Lane-Maher, 2004, p. 253). Therefore, it is germane to stand out that most of these manifestations, features, and aspects may be easily gauged. For example, it has been suggested that "...the adaptability to change, satisfaction in work relationships, nurturance in leadership, and social and environmental responsibility in business practices" (Heaton et al., 2004, p. 74) are variables that may be measured as applied spirituality. For instance, according to Todd (2009) members of the chemical industry, primarily multinational corporations, have voluntarily joined together under the ICCA to promote initiatives such as responsible care program and ISO 14000. In a related vein, managers have considered spirituality as a mechanism whereby one may increase integrity, motivation, and job satisfaction (Cavanagh & Bandsuch, 2002). Obviously, these constructs may be also addressed and assessed as applied spirituality.

However, some authors have explored other research avenues. Vasconcelos (2011a), for example, identifies theoretical linkages between the societal marketing concept and workplace spirituality. Rather, this theoretical overlapping embraces some constructs, namely, employees, work, workplace, quality of life, ethics, corporate citizenship, and social responsibility. On the other hand, Fox (1994) asserted that an authentic spirituality can assist us in creating good work. It is as a noble view, especially when one puts into perspective that the majority of workplaces require substantial improvements. Kurth (2003), in turn, offers a very pragmatic standpoint by regarding that the practice of spirituality embraces service through caring relationships, namely, treating others with dignity, respect, honesty, trust, and love. In sum, the idea of applied workplace spirituality is essentially grounded on

Pursuing organizational spirituality: some lessons from a financial services corporation

organizational virtuous behavior. In this sense, Table 1 presents a synthesis of how companies are following this path. At first sight, those organizations have carried out an applied spirituality in a coherent manner. Rather, they are apparently going beyond the profit-pursuing purpose and materialistic interests. More importantly, they are supportive of the practice of doing good, behaving ethically, and providing substantial benefits to society. In a nutshell, their feats and acts speak for themselves. Taken together, those firms are embracing a truly spiritual organizational frame.

Table 1

Some examples of applied spirituality in organizations

Organization	Corporate Actions	Source
AES	It is committed to act with integrity, be fair, have fun, and be socially responsible.	Gull & Doh (2004)
Bank of Montreal	It integrates issues of spirituality such as employees' personal values and visions into human resources and organizational development functions.	Brandt (1996, as cited in Caccioppe 2000, p. 50)
Ben & Jerry's	It has been acknowledged by its social and environmental activism. Surprisingly, each 10 cents of dollar of revenue made by this company is donated for a better world.	Gibbons (2000); Mitroff (2002, p. 40)
Boatman' First National Bank	It also integrates issues of spirituality such as employees' personal values and visions into human resources and organizational development functions.	Brandt (1996, as cited in Caccioppe 2000, p. 50)
Body Shop	It has been admired by practicing social and environmental activism, as well as by combining profit motive, and meaningful work.	Gibbons (2000) Caccioppe (2000)
Harley Davidson	It has successfully combined the profit motive with the values of social responsibility and meaningful work. In addition, its shared vision and philosophy of continuous learning and participative decision-making process have helped the firm to be profitable once again.	Caccioppe (2000, p. 50)
Herman Miller	During Max DePree's tenure this firm was regularly listed on Fortune list of "the best managed" and "the most innovative". In addition, his humane and religious-based philosophy of management has prevailed.	DePree (1989, as cited in Korac-Kakabdash et al., 2002, p. 179)

Management & Marketing

Organization	Corporate Actions	Source
Living Nature	This organization shows a strong sense of purpose by creating safe and authentic products in such a way that it is reflected in its corporate culture, which encourages active participation in decision-making from research and development to sales and marketing.	Pavlovich & Corner (2009)
Ouimet-Tomasso	It has demonstrated that human happiness and organizational efficiency are both intertwined and achievable aims.	Ouimet (2002)
ServiceMaster	In this organization, both people and profit are part of its mission. It commonly hosts regular Bible study classes for employees.	Pfeffer (2003, p. 43) Lawler (2003, p. 164)
Southwest Airlines	This company has exhibited excellent human resource policies, sound values (such as empowerment, humor, enthusiasm, sense of community), and positive outcomes.	Milliman et al. (1999)
Starbucks	This company shows outstanding features such as interconnectedness, authenticity, reciprocity and personal goodwill, a deep sense of meaning, greater motivation, and organizational excellence.	Marques (2007, pp. 254-255)
Tom's of Maine	Tom has successfully used an advertisement style that covers both products and corporate philosophy. Besides, this organization was pioneer on corporate social responsibility concerns. It is a clear example of positive deviance to Spreitzer and Sonenshein, and a spiritual organization for us.	Wagner-Marsh & Conley (1999) Spreitzer & Sonenshein (2003, p. 212)
Toro Company's	This company has an internal program (credo) of employee empowerment that is aimed at creating a culture based on mutual respect, valuing each employee or owner (as coined by its CEO).	Wagner-Marsh & Conley (1999)
Wayne Schmidt of Schmidt Associates Architects, Inc	It is a kind of firm that believes in putting service before profit.	Wagner-Marsh & Conley (1999)
Wetherill Associates	This company has the commitment to be completely honest with its customers and employees.	Wagner-Marsh & Conley (1999)

Source: Adapted from Vasconcelos (2008a).

Pursuing organizational spirituality: some lessons from a financial services corporation

I hasten to add that the reasons that led me to investigate Serasa have to do with its consistent performance, strong reputation as a good employer, and public acknowledgement that this organization has received throughout the years. Thus, I intend to focus my analyses on critical points in order to find whether Serasa is pursuing an organizational spirituality orientation. On the other hand, I propose that, *at the simplest level*, a spiritual organization must embrace at least some salient features, namely: (1) it must meet the needs and demands of society through ongoing corporate social responsibility (CSR) actions; (2) it must also show a consistent internal marketing (IM) policies in order to value its employees; and, (3) as a result, it tends to achieve suitable outcomes in its business operation and be admired (see Figure 1). The assumption is that those well-performed features tend to distinguish a spiritual organization from the others. Such a conceptual framework encompasses the core belief that CSR construct is closely tied to a spiritual-driven organization, as it has been suggested by some researchers (e.g., Heaton et al., 2004; Hogan, 2000). In other words, CSR plays a vital role by enabling a firm to go beyond its own interests so as to satisfy societal needs likewise. As a consequence, CSR also contributes to an organization to build a respectable corporate image.

Moreover, the suggested conceptual model also provides a novel approach regarding that it embraces the theoretical contribution of the internal marketing concept (IMC). In doing so, the organizations enhance the likelihood of getting better results given that IM tools prioritize to fulfill internal customers' needs (employees) in order to serve more proficiently the external customers' wants. Furthermore, it is not reasonable to expect the commitment and engagement of employees if the organizations are not concerned with their needs, aspirations, and dreams.

According to IMC researchers, "Application of the IM concept is translated into positive employee attitudes towards their work, including organizational commitment, job involvement, work motivation and job satisfaction" (Tansuhaj et al., 1991, p. 198). Therefore, IMC seems to be a suitable management tool to build a kind of organizational climate and job involvement whereby employees are encouraged to cooperate in order to improve the organization as a whole (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Caruana & Calleya, 1998; Varey, 1995). In this sense, IMC can help an organization to formulate and implement actions and organizational changes toward increasing customer satisfaction. However, the internal customers do need to know that their performance will be fairly rewarded in order to avoid organizational disruption or an internal demarketing frame (e.g., Vasconcelos, 2011b). After all, "People at work need to know that they will be measured by how well they do and that it is worthwhile to do well" (Berry & Parasuraman, 2000, p. 185). Furthermore, a company that adopts IMC is, by extension, signaling that it values its internal market (employees) and such an effort is part of the workplace spirituality theoretical domain.



Figure 1. A Conceptual Model of Spiritual Organization

Nonetheless, it remains the organizational challenge to engender convincing actions in a daily basis toward that view. In this regard, IMC requires the implementation of strong human resources policies toward the internal market or internal customers in order to be effective (Dunmore, 2002; Grönroos, 1993). Indeed, that effort embraces the most salient form of building a healthy relationship between organizations and employees or, to put it differently, a win-win relationship. Otherwise, it will be naive to expect employees to be involved or committed to the future of a business. Further, how can employees pursue good results if they live in a corrosive organizational climate? If a firm wants to build a corporate culture of commitment toward its goals, it must provide resources and opportunities that are worthwhile to its human capital.

On the face of it, IMC researchers have proposed that jobs should be managed as products. Such a view suggests that jobs may be designed to encourage “buying” and performance and discourage quitting (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Berry, 1981; Berry & Parasuraman, 2000; Ewing & Caruana, 1999; Flipo, 2000; Greene et al., 1994; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000; Sasser & Arbeit, 1976). Therefore, those organizations that provide attractive human resources policies through applying IM tools are recognized by society. Viewed in this light, Serasa has demonstrated a great gift in terms of fulfilling its internal customers' needs and, as a result, it has been awarded by society.

6. Method

As a research strategy case studies are very useful, especially in organizational and management studies. In this sense, researchers note: "Case studies are very appropriate when the researcher is interested in process or seeks an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon because of its uniqueness" (Ellinger et al., 2005, p. 330). More interestingly, case studies help researchers to cope with a larger repertoire of sources such as documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations (Yin, 1989). Thus, I developed deep analysis and triangulations based on mass media articles that were scattered in newspapers, magazines (reports and special editions), academic papers, narratives, and Serasa website information in order to find any signal of inaccuracy or unjustified benevolence toward this firm. Taken together, these sources proved to be reliable, even though one admits that they are not the strongest ones. In fact, this research design allowed me to make sound longitudinal observations of Serasa organizational behavior (i.e., I have been gathering data about this company from those sources since 1999).

Therefore, this investigation is based on the secondary data given that it is premised on the notion that well-known spiritualized characters like Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, Moses, among others, are thus recognized for the sake of their ideas, feats, behaviors, and acts. Similarly, I propose that spiritually-based organizations should be examined by the same things. More exactly, by investigating their achievements, organizational policies, strategies, held values, official statements, among other aspects, through an ongoing basis one can certainly identify their organizational identity (i.e., who they really are). Indeed, as outlined in Table 1, such firms generally show plenty of positive features, good qualities, and virtuous. Accordingly, I propose that the most effective way to find whether an organization follows an organizational spirituality orientation is by probing, for example, what it does to keep itself alive, how it behaves, and how it is seen by society. Through the careful analysis of these aspects one can (1) obtain appropriate answers to sensitive questions, (2) elicit the real organization purposes, (3) and find its level of spiritual orientation, if any. In sum, as it will be seen in the following sections, this path turned out to be suitable.

7. An overview of Serasa Experian

Over the last decades, Brazil has consistently showed that it is a respectable example of Latin America's and the BRIC countries financial stability. Despite the fact that The Real Plan broke economic barriers, attracted foreign investors, and urged a strong drop in poverty by slashing the inflation that taxed the poor, Brazil still faces, like other emerging economies, harsh problems such as unequal income distribution, slavery in some parts of the country, low level of primary education, crushing taxes, overvalued currency, corruption, disturbing violence, strong bureaucracy, and obsolete infrastructure that hampers the country GDP grow. On the other hand, there is no

shortage of highly qualified human capital exhibiting MBAs from international top business schools running Brazilian companies or multinational branches.

However, this blurred scenario has not hindered Serasa of being considered a very successful company when one takes into account the way that it is run and the number of awards and public acknowledgments that it has been gathering over the years. In fact, this organization has persuasively demonstrated that is not impossible to achieve business outcomes and to meet social demands likewise. At present, corporations are seen as citizens and society increasingly expects they act decently (Handy, 1999). Viewed in this light, Serasa has also shown its corporate citizenship face by doing a large number of relevant things such as empowering its people, attending hundreds of customers that look for help to regularize their credit ratings for nothing (in order to assure that they will be able to make purchases in installments again), sharing managerial know how, quality, and productivity knowledge with communities' institutions as well (Herzog, 2000).

Serasa was founded in 1968 and it is now one of the world's leading economic and financial analysis and information firms, with full domestic and foreign coverage. Moreover, Serasa employs around 2,500 workers and is supported by a powerful telecommunication and information technology center. It operates in all Brazilian state capitals and major cities, that is, it is present in 59 strategic locations. As for Serasa strategy, one can assert that it is very simple considering that it basically focuses on providing quick, accurate, and reliable information for Banks, professional associations, and business (irrespective of their sizes) of all areas. Furthermore, the company updates itself frequently through cutting-edge credit, information, and telecommunication technology aiming to develop its line of services.

On the other hand, as a holder of the largest data bank on individuals and businesses, Serasa surely plays a vital role in the majority of credit and business related decisions made in that country. After all, it facilitates over 4 million inquiries per day made by over 400 thousands direct or indirect customers (Serasa Experian, 2011a). As a result of its performance, in 1995 Serasa became the first organization - with fully Brazilian capital at that time - to receive The National Quality Award, which is, in turn, inspired on both Baldrige and Deming awards. Further, it must be pointed out that such an award grants its awardees the status of world class companies. In 2000, Serasa repeated that feat for the third time becoming the first company to achieve such a result (Herzog, 2000; Prêmios Serasa Experian, 2011).

In fact, Herzog (2000) pondered that Serasa could be only a middle-sized Brazilian firm concerned with attending customers well and being profitable for it. However, Serasa seemed to be much more than that. After all, it became a standard of good corporate behavior and this feat has favored its flourishing over the years.

7.1. Social responsibility

Broadly speaking, CSR initiatives are strongly integrated into today's business practices given that they benefit both society and organization image (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2004; Deaconu et al., 2011). In a related vein, CSR actions are also

Pursuing organizational spirituality: some lessons from a financial services corporation

attributed to organizations that are operating under a spiritual orientation (e.g., Hogan, 2000). In this sense, Serasa has gained notoriety due to the implementation of acknowledged social programs, among other things. Accordingly, this organization has been distinguished in all annual editions of *Guia de Boa Cidadania Corporativa*¹ (Guide of Good Corporate Citizenship) published by *Exame* – one of the most prestigious Brazilian business magazines - given it has systematically performed some of the best practices of corporate citizenship of the country (see *Guia de Boa Cidadania Corporativa*, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006; *Guia Exame Sustentabilidade*, 2007, 2008, 2009).

In the edition of 2001 of that guide, for example, one of its CSR programs, denominated as “Young Citizen”, was highlighted given that it enabled professional training to the young generation from 16 to 21 years-old that were attending or concluding the high school (*Guia de Boa Cidadania Corporativa*, 2001). It is also worth pointing out that in the earlier edition, Serasa was extolled due to the allocation of 4% of its budget for CSR programs toward meeting the communities’ needs (Herzog, 2000). Furthermore, the voluntary teams that operate in all its units in Brazil are seemingly the upshot of the organization’s efforts toward motivating its people given that they organize themselves. As such, all Serasa social action programs have taken into account employees’ skills, preferences, and availability. For example, the so-called Serasa Social Process gathered more than one third of its staff and it has been operating along with 107 organizations across Brazil offering support and help to approximately 34,000 people, including children, senior citizens and special individuals needs (Social Serasa, 2008). Taken as whole, it meant that more than 1,000 employees are volunteers of social actions (Social Serasa, 2009).

On the other hand, Serasa takes part in the *Instituto Ethos*, a very respectful Brazilian business association whose members aim to reach sustainable, long term economic and financial success by means of social and ethical behavior. As a result of this engagement, Serasa sponsors the *Ethos-Valor*, that is, an award that is bestowed to outstanding undergraduate students who have developed research about social responsibility.

7.2. Some results of an effective performance

As previously remarked, Serasa has gathered distinctive acknowledgements and awards thanks to its performance. In this section, just a few of them are listed as follows²:

- the best organization to work for in Brazil in 2006 by *Época* magazine (special annual edition) the Best 100 Organizations to Work for (in partnership with Great Place to Work For Institute).
- the 3rd place in the list of the 150 Best Organizations to Work In Brazil, as well as one the best 50 companies for women to work for in Brazil (4th place) published by *Exame-Você S/A* magazines (from this year on in partnership with FIA-USP) in 2006.

- ranked in the 1st place in *Época* magazine (the ranking of large companies) and in the 2nd place in the ranking of service firms in 2007.
- the 3rd place of *Você S/A-Exame* list of the 150 Best Places to Work For in Brazil, as well as it was awarded as the best firm in both rankings of women to work for and financial services organization in 2007.
- the 1st place in the ranking of financial service firms by the same publication in 2008.
- ranked among the 100 Best Organizations to Work for in Brazil in 2008 by *Época* (the 10th place in the ranking of the most attractive organizations for job applicants).
- for ten consecutive years Serasa had been ranked in *Exame* guide of Good Corporation Citizenship in Brazil.
- ranked as one of the 100 Best Organizations to Work for in Latin America and Brazil by *Época* magazine and Great Place to Work Institute in 2009.
- the 13th place in the list of companies that better perform the ratio of job promotion opportunities vis-à-vis the total number of employees in 2009.
- It is a noteworthy feat to be classified by Great Place to Work® Institute's methodology for the eleven times in a row.
- one of the best organizations in terms of the ratio of job promotion opportunities in relation to the total number of employees, according to the 100 Best Organizations to Work for in Brazil by *Época*.
- one of the most attractive organizations for both job applicants and hiring opportunities by the same publication.

I believe that only organizations that follow a spiritually-based orientation - being them aware of it or not – can achieve those set of acknowledgements and awards. That is, organizations that strive to deliver the highest value to society. Obviously, Serasa has fared well in many aspects, especially when one regards that organizations have increasingly been under fierce competition. As a result, this organization has apparently been a role model company. Furthermore, other dimension that Serasa has reached expressive outcomes is related to employees valuing.

7.3. An Internal Marketing (IM) Paradigm

As noted earlier, Serasa has consistently been awarded thanks to its effective human resource (HR) policies focused on its employees' needs. For this reason, it has systematically been ranked in two of the most important business guides that publish the list of the best companies to work for in Brazil (i.e., *Exame-Você S/A* and *Época* magazines, respectively). Furthermore, to be listed in both lists – that is, *Época* magazine whose applied methodology is the same of the American counterpart Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For in America, and *Exame-Você S/A*, which has employed a new methodology since 2006 under the guidance of the University of São Paulo – means to win all but an “Oscar” of HR practices regarding its importance.

Pursuing organizational spirituality: some lessons from a financial services corporation

As previously highlighted, Serasa has reached these expressive deeds since 1999. Therefore, evidence suggests that Serasa has carried out IM strategies (see Table 2).

Table 2

Serasa Experian assessment on Exame-Você S/A guide of the best companies to work for in Brazil (1999-2005)

Variables	Number of Stars ¹						
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 ¹⁰
Salary	3	4	3	3	4	4	4
Benefits	4	4	3	3	4	3	3
Professional Development ²	8 ³	4	4	3	3	3	4
Security and Trust on Leadership ⁴	3	3	3	3	-	-	-
Balance (work and personal life) ⁵	-	-	-	-	4	4	4
Work and Job Pride	5	4	3	4	3	5	4
Quality of Internal Communication ⁶	3	3	3	4	-	-	-
Work environment friendship	5	3	4	4	3	4	5
System of work innovation ⁷	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social Responsibility ⁸	-	4	3	2	-	-	-
Ethic and Citizenship ⁹	-	-	-	-	4	5	5
Credibility ⁹	-	-	-	-	4	4	5
Respect ⁹	-	-	-	-	4	4	4
Impartiality ⁹	-	-	-	-	4	4	5
SUM	33	29	26	26	37	40	43

Source: Adapted from Guia Exame – As Melhores para Trabalhar (1999); Guia Exame – As 100 Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2000; 2001; 2002); Guia Exame – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2003); Guia Exame-Você S/A – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2004; 2005).

Notes:

- ¹ The rating displayed was a result of comparisons between Serasa and other organizations selected by the guide.
- ² There were two topics in earlier 2000 edition, that is, “Career Opportunities” and “Training and Development”. Yet, in 2001 and 2002 they were combined to form just one, that is, “Career and Training Opportunities”. However, in 2003 it was renamed again as “Professional Development”.
- ³ This was the result of the combination of the two topics as above mentioned.
- ⁴ This topic was discarded in 2003.
- ⁵ It was introduced in 2003.
- ⁶ It was discarded in 2003.
- ⁷ It was depicted only in 1999 edition.
- ⁸ It was discarded in 2003.
- ⁹ These topics were introduced in 2003.
- ¹⁰ In 2006 the guide was published by *Época* magazine in partnership with the Best Place to Work For Institute Brazil, but the criteria were modified whereas Guia Exame- Você S/A published its guide, for the first time in partnership with FIA-USP, following a completely different criterion.

Also of noteworthy is the fact that there has been fierce competition among companies to be included in those Brazilian business guides. Actually, Brazilian companies and local multinational branches have ever grasped that good workplaces represent a differential on hiring and keeping talents. As a consequence, there has been considerable effort, at least from the top tier organizations, toward being recognized as good employers. These initiatives can be regarded as part of the so-called corporate branding, that is, a value proposition based on a strong and unique image that distinguishes an organization from the others (Lawler, 2003). In fact, Lawler (2003, p. 73) remarks: “Branding essentially crystallizes an organization’s value proposition so that people have no doubt what they gain as a result of working for it.”

Table 3 shows some key-indicators of Serasa performance that deserve to be highlighted. First, its revenue and staff has consistently grown throughout the years. However, whereas its revenue grew astonishingly more than fourfold over the period between 1998 and 2008 (in 2009 this data was unavailable) the total of staff members just increased 55% over the period between 1998 and 2009. Secondly, the data also revealed that men and women have received equal opportunities of working there. In addition, it must be noted the performance of the variables as follows:

- *The total number of managers.* The total number grew around 308% during the period between 1998 and 2009. For example, in 2009 Serasa increased 8% of them in comparison to 2008.

- *Women in managerial positions.* One signal of equal treatment and diversity organizational policies rests on the number of women in charge of middle and higher managerial positions. In this regard, Serasa had ever provided a very respectful portion of these positions to female professionals (e.g., they had reached 52% in 2004). In contrast, the 100 Best Organizations to Work for in Brazil provided 38% of their leadership positions to women (Silveira, 2010) in 2009. Serasa performance was just similar to them in this particular issue.

- *Job promotions.* Over the last years, the organization has been substantially increased the opportunities for job promotion. For example, 2008 was the best result of this variable when it reached 26%.

- *Turnover.* Surprisingly, in 2009 22% of Serasa workforce left the company. It was a huge increase of 100% in comparison with the previous year. At the first sight, the process of corporate organizational culture change – given that Serasa was acquired by the British Experian Group – and the impact of the worldwide economic downturn may account for such an outlier.

Table 3

Serasa Experian general data

Variables ¹	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Revenue (in 1.000 R\$)	179,0	195,3	256,1	296,7	328,3	381,0	456,3	565,4	691,0	820,0	940,5	-
Staff	1,626	1,634	1,714	1,907	1,964	1,925	2,113	2,198	2,361	2,488	2,502	2,513
Percentage of man	-	-	-	-	51	50	48	48	48	49	49	50
Percentage of women	-	-	-	-	49	50	52	52	52	51	51	50
Turnover (in percentage)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	8	7	11	22
Total of managers	106 (7%)	150 (9%)	166 (10%)	181 (9%)	194 (10%)	196 (10%)	204 (10%)	350 (16%)	370 (16%)	384 (15%)	400 (16%)	432 (17%)
Women in managerial positions	29 (27%)	44 (29%)	51 (31%)	60 (33%)	66 (34%)	80 (41%)	107 (52%)	150 (43%)	155 (42%)	161 (42%)	164 (41%)	160 (37%)
Employees promoted	-	174 (11%)	197 (11%)	307 (16%)	188 (10%)	215 (11%)	231 (11%)	252 (11%)	307 (13%)	423 (17%)	651 (26%)	452 (18%)

Source: Compiled from Guia Exame – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (1999); Guia Exame – As 100 Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2000; 2001; 2002); Guia Exame – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2003); Guia Exame –Você S/A – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2004; 2005); Época – As 100 melhores Empresas para Trabalhar (2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010).

Note:

¹ The data are always published in the guide of the next year.

On the other hand, the main HR policy factor stated by Serasa employees to stay in the company (see Table 4) – although the guide does not present the sample size which was interviewed – has been the professional development opportunities. The topic quality of life is rated in the second position by the interviewees to stay at company. Despite strong reduction of preferences related to salary and benefits since 2004, some employees' statements reinforce the perception that they have a high level of job satisfaction. For example, a secretary remarked: "In other places where I worked, I used to go to the appointments just for taking the minutes". With reference to the social inclusion actions, a paraplegic employee noted: "This is the organization where I have indeed succeeded in advocating the cause of inclusion". Relatedly, a manager revealed his feeling of pride of being a Serasa member as follows: "I know that Serasa needs what I do and my work helps it to grow. This motivates me to want to do more and well" (Folha de S. Paulo 2004, p. 2).

Table 4

Serasa Experian employees' reasons to stay at company

Reasons	Period							
	2003 (%)	2004 (%)	2005 (%)	2006 (%)	2007 (%)	2008 (%)	2009 (%)	2010 (%)
Professional Development	19	46	47	53	55	56	59	58
Quality of life	30	29	33	35	32	29	25	23
Salary and Benefits	34	29	18	10	10	12	13	16
Tenure	17	5	2	2	3	3	3	3

Source: Compiled from Guia Exame – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2003), Guia Exame – Você S/A Você S/A – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2004; 2005); Época – As 100 Melhores Empresas para Trabalhar (2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010).

Moreover, by addressing employees (McKee, 2003) or internal customers' needs (Biberman & Whitty, 1997), an organization is operating under a spiritual organization frame, that is, the aim of this investigation. In this regards, Serasa shows a healthful and intelligent concern with its employees given the large number of incentives and opportunities of professional development that it has been provided to them. In fact, those features are worthy of any company's employees listed in Fortune edition of the 100 Best Companies to Work for in U.S., or any organization that wants to attract gifted people to be part of its workforce. In doing so, Serasa shows that it cares about its employees' well-being (Oliveira & Limongi-França, 2005).

Given the managerial approach and features of the IMC, it has been conceptualized as more aptly to address the issue of happiness in the workplace by means of a broader theoretical approach, namely, putting people in the first place, improving employee job satisfaction, and developing jobs as products in a wider perspective (see Vasconcelos, 2008b). In this sense, Serasa scan its employees' happiness at work twice per semester and weak points or problematic issues are fixed through appropriate action plans (Época – As 100 Melhores para Trabalhar – 2010-2011, 2010).

However, Table 5 indicates that Serasa has been receiving less favorable evaluations in relation to important measures of employees' job satisfaction and organizational HR policies since 2007. The assessment of major variables such as happiness at work, workplace environment, leadership, and organizational citizenship has fallen. The same trend can also be noted in relation to organizational identification, job satisfaction and motivation, perception of career development, and leadership approval. More noticeable, however, are the negative perceptions attributed to career and health variables. The former is a very sensitive issue given that it constitutes a persuasive way to attract and keep talents and despite the positive evaluation obtained in 2010, it remains substantially lower than 2007 (the best result). On the other hand, the latter variable represents a very critical issue to be solved by

Pursuing organizational spirituality: some lessons from a financial services corporation

the majority of organizations worldwide. After all, it is in stark contrast with the current global competition and ongoing need of innovation that prompt workers to bear 24/7 work schedule, increasing stress and burnout. Taken together, Serasa performance has decreased in some relevant factors; nonetheless, the data also suggests that it did not impair its reputation as a good employer until now.

Table 5

Serasa Experian employees' assessments

Variables	Period (rate in percentage)				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Organizational identification	95.8	97.8	92.7	86.6	83.8
Job satisfaction and motivation	90.1	94.3	85.2	78.0	75.5
Believe to have career development	85.7	91.9	80.3	72.2	69.1
Leadership approval	87.2	92.4	82.5	76.2	73.8
	Period (rate from 0 to 100)				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Happiness at work	84.8	91.1	85.3	76.2	75.2
Workplace environment	89.5	93.9	84.9	77.9	75.0
Human Resources Management Quality	69.1	97.6	86.6	73.4	73.9
Business strategy and management	-	82.6	60.6	67.6	77.7
Leadership	-	96.0	84.0	83.2	77.3
Organizational Citizenship	84.2	88.5	79.5	75.1	74.5
Organizational Policies	-	85.4	67.6	70.7	70.1
Career	62.3	84.9	48.3	42.9	61.9
Development	80.0	96.6	66.7	83.6	72.3
Salaries and benefits	65.5	78.3	63.0	76.4	76.3
Health	83.3	81.6	92.5	79.7	70.3

Source: Compiled from Guia Exame-Você S/A – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2006) and Guia Você S/A-Exame – As 150 Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2007; 2008; 2009; 2010).

The pervasiveness of religion and spiritual factors was pointed out by Serasa executives as well. The former CEO, Elcio Anibal de Lucca, for example, claimed that Serasa is a business enterprise influenced by Christian philosophy. In this regard, it does not tolerate the weaknesses of character such as sexual embarrassment, bribery or some other kind of behavior that can damage the fellows (Cohen, 2002). In fact, such principles still guide the company search for finding and hiring ideal job candidates (Época – As 100 Melhores para Trabalhar – 2010-2011, 2010). Overall, evidence indicated that Serasa's policies toward inclusion, organizational citizenship, employees' valuing, and Christian's tenets were grounded on humanistic and religious notions (see also Serasa Experian, 2011b).

On the other hand, an interesting initiative of organizational change took place when Serasa put into practice a new organization chart, which was internally called of

“matrix-bipolar”. That is, each functional area had - under that arrangement - the mission of thinking the present and the future of the business. In order to deal with these tasks two independent directors were designated to each area. Thus, one was in charge of, so to speak, the daily operations, while the other one was fully dedicated to develop new solutions and search for new opportunities toward the future (Segalla, 2007; Sekeff, 2006). Nonetheless, this unusual arrangement was replaced by the traditional business unit model (Herzog, 2008).

8. Discussion

As any organization, Serasa also depicts some managerial problems. Rather, the company had to deal with some unsatisfied customers (Folha de São Paulo, 1997), as well as it was condemned to conform to legal determinations, that is, to withdraw from its database debt records whose plaintiffs filled lawsuits against organizations, among other things (Folha de São Paulo, 2000). I surmise that it could be explained due to its kind of business. Thus, a relevant question comes up: which company in this world is, in fact, free of wrongdoings? In a world full of errors it would be strange to find out one. Accordingly, it would be more rational do not believe in such an assumption. However, there is no doubt that “... employees want their companies to do *very* well and *a lot of* good” (Sirota et al., 2005, p. 141, italics in the original). Thus, it would be fair to recognize Serasa efforts in doing the best in order to overcome many today’s sensitive business issues and challenges. Nonetheless, organizational spirituality places the imperative to the organizations to keep focused on the spiritual path (Biberman, 2009).

More specifically, “It should be noted that organizations change, just as people do, and their levels of spirituality may go up or down because of various factors, such as mergers, acquisitions, leadership or directional changes, and the like” (Biberman 2009, p. 115). In this regard, a question must be addressed: how a company may be perceived as a spiritual one, even though these organizational changes are taking place? In a broader sense, I suggest that for a firm to be regarded as a spiritual organization it must cogently show disposition to share wealth, to disseminate knowledge, to be committed to enhancing the well-being of its customers, and engendering progress (see Figure 2).

Pursuing organizational spirituality: some lessons from a financial services corporation

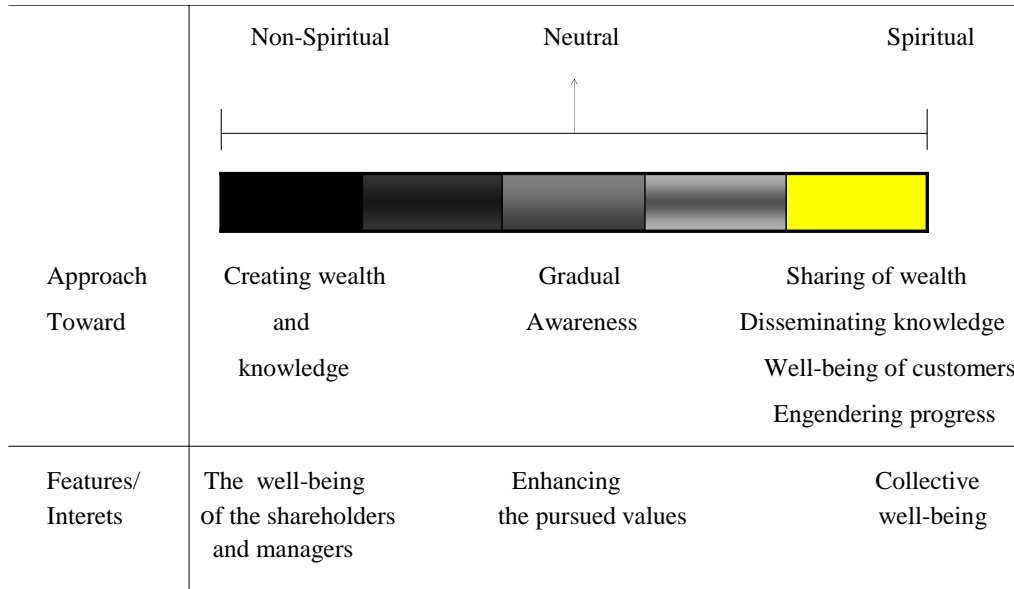


Figure 2. Continuum of organizations' orientation

Ideally, it may exhibit the feature of being concerned with the collective well-being by enabling, for example, empathy processes, as suggested by Natale & Sora (2010). Therefore, evidence shows that Serasa is a kind of corporation geared toward good principles. In fact, the actions, awards, and principles that mold, so to speak, the character of this organization do not let any doubt about it.

9. Conclusions

Although researchers and managers have paid attention to workplace spirituality there is much room to be filled in terms of applied spirituality, especially at the organizational level. In fact, it seems that organizations start to realize that the spiritual factor may help them in handling with their employees' needs, societal demands, and get better performance as well. Research indicates that workplace spirituality may elicit the best from both people and organizations by employing their best skills, capacities, and expertise in order to build a better world.

Moreover, corporations that are run under a spiritual orientation are strongly focused on doing good. As such, they tend to contribute to the society well-being through many ways such as valuing their employees, practicing social responsibility and corporate citizenship behavior, acting ethically, and truly respecting their stakeholders. Firms devoid of such principles will not likely attract and keep talents that are looking for meaningful work. Therefore, I surmise that in the future will survive just firms inspired by spiritual principles. On the other hand, anecdotal

evidence shows that people are increasingly eager to work for organizations that respect their beliefs, faiths, quality of working life, work-family balance needs, and so on. Put another way, organizations where issues like environment preservation, community, transparency, social responsibility, pride, diversity, inclusion, employee recognition, ethical behavior, and respect (i.e., spiritual organization dimensions) are addressed.

The findings of this study suggest that Serasa has been pursuing an organizational spirituality orientation. Evidence shows that its features, values, and feats are typical of an organization in which spirituality is more than a word, even though it is unaware of it. Nonetheless, some restrictions and concerns must be addressed, especially from, as previously noted, June 2007 on when Serasa was acquired by the British Experian Group (the global information solution company). As a result, the organization is now denominated as Serasa-Experian. From that year on, Serasa has not been awarded anymore as the best in any indicator of both the 100 (Época magazine) and 150 best organizations (Exame-Você S/A) to work for in Brazil, yet it still takes part of this selective cohort of organizations. On the face of it, some research questions emerge: Could be recent Serasa results indicative of some disruption? Does Serasa acquisition mean the beginning of the lack of spiritual vitality? Further, is Serasa going to become a non-spiritual organization from now on?

In my view, it is early to answer those research questions, yet it seems that Serasa has somewhat lost its impetus toward workplace spirituality. In this sense, future studies could examine whether Serasa Experian still track down an organizational spirituality orientation. Will its broadened CSR strategies and IM policies still percolate organizational corporate culture and leadership core values? Lastly, this investigation contributes to workplace spirituality, particularly at the organizational level. Moreover, the suggested conceptual model must be seen only as a starting point to organizations interested in becoming spiritually-driven enterprises. Therefore, future research should also expand this basic conceptual model by incorporating other constructs that were not addressed in this article.

Acknowledgements

The author is very grateful to the anonymous reviewer as well as to Mathew Sheep and his colleagues for their helpful comments and suggestions on earlier version of this article.

Notes

¹ This guide started to be published in 2.000 and Serasa has been distinguished in all editions, except the edition of the year 2010.

² The complete list of awards and acknowledgements can be read at: <http://www.serasaexperian.com.br/serasaexperian/institucional/premios/index.htm>

References

- Ahmed, P., Rafiq, M., "Internal marketing issues and challenges", *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(9), 2003, pp. 1177-1186
- Ashar, H., Lane-Maher, M., "Success and spirituality in the new business paradigm", *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 13(3), 2004, pp. 249-260
- Ashforth, B.E., Pratt, M.G., "Institutionalized spirituality: An oxymoron?", in Giacalone, R.A., Jurkiewicz, C.L. (eds.), *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational performance*, M. E. Sharpe, New York, 2003, pp. 93-107
- Ashmos, D.P., Duchon, D., "Spirituality at work: A conceptualization and measure", *Journal of Management Inquiry* 9(2), 2000, pp. 134-145
- Berry, L.L., "The employee as customer", *Journal of Retail Banking*, 3(1), 1981, pp. 33-40
- Berry, L.L., Parasuraman, A., "Services marketing starts from within", in Varey, R.J., Lewis, B.R. (eds.), *Internal marketing: directions for management*, Routledge, London, 2000, pp. 173-191
- Biberman, J., "What makes an organization spiritual? Applied spirituality in organizational structure, design, processes, and practices", in Marques, J., Dhiman, S., King, R. (eds.), *The workplace and spirituality: New perspectives on research and practice*, Skylight Paths Publishing, Woodstock, 2009, pp. 111-118
- Biberman, J., Whitty, M.A., "A postmodern spiritual future for work", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 10(2), 1997, pp. 130-138
- Brandt, E., "Corporate pioneers explore spirituality peace", *HR Magazine*, 41(4), 1996, pp. 82-87
- Cacioppe, R., "Creating spirit at work: Re-visioning organization development and leadership – Part 1", *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 21(1), 2000, pp. 48-54
- Camkin, S., "The relationship between spiritual well-being and employee engagement: An exploratory study", Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Fielding Graduate University, 2008
- Caruana, A., Calleya, P., "The effect of internal marketing on organisational commitment among retail bank managers", *The International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 16(3), 1998, pp. 108-116
- Cavanagh, G.F., Bandsuch, M.R., "Virtue as a benchmark for spirituality in business", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 38(1/2), 2002, pp. 109-117
- Chamiec-Case, R.R., "Developing a tool measure social worker's perceptions regarding to extent to which they integrate their spirituality in the workplace", Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Graduate School of Social Science, Fordham University, 2006
- Cohen, D., "Deus ajuda?", *Exame*, No. 758, 23 de Janeiro, 2002, pp. 20-30
- Daniel, J.L., "The effect of workplace spirituality on team effectiveness", *Journal of Management Development*, 29(5), 2010, pp. 442-456
- Deaconu, A., Radu, C., Puia, R., "Education – multiplier of the effects caused by the initiatives of corporate social responsibility", *Management & Marketing*, 6(1), 2011, pp. 111-122.
- DePree, M. (1989), *Leadership is an art*, Dell, New York
- Dunmore, M. (2002), *Inside-out marketing: How to create an internal marketing strategy*, Kogan Page Limited, London
- Ellinger, A.D., Watkins, K.E., Marsick, V.J., "Case study research methods", in Swanson, R.A., Holton, E.F. III (eds.), *Research in organizations: Foundations and methods of inquiry*, Berret-Koehler Publishers, SanFrancisco, 2005, pp. 327-350
- Época – As 100 Melhores para Trabalhar – 2006-2007 (2006), "Serasa", pp. 6-9

- Época – As 100 Melhores para Trabalhar – 2007-2008 (2007), “Serasa”, p. 126
- Época – As 100 Melhores para Trabalhar – 2008-2009 (2008), “Serasa”, p. 130
- Época – As 100 Melhores para Trabalhar – 2009-2010 (2009), “Serasa Experian”, p. 134
- Época – As 100 Melhores para Trabalhar – 2010-2011 (2010), “Serasa Experian”, p. 134
- Ewing, M.T., Caruana, A., “An internal marketing approach to public sector management: the marketing and human resources interface”, *The International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 12(1), 1999, pp. 17-29
- Flipo, J.P., “Effectiveness implies leaving myths aside”, in Varey, R.J., Lewis, B.R. (eds.), *Internal marketing: directions for management*, Routledge, London, 2000, pp. 63-74
- Folha de São Paulo, “Cliente afirma que Serasa é difamadora”, *Folha de São Paulo - Caderno Cotidiano*, 28 de julho, available at: <http://www.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff280739.htm> (accessed 17 May 2002), 1997
- Folha de São Paulo, “Serasa é obrigada a ignorar dívida em juízo”, *Folha de São Paulo - Caderno Cotidiano*, available at: <http://www.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff2509200024.htm> (accessed 17 May 2002)
- Folha de São Paulo, “Empregados contam por que têm orgulho”, *Folha de São Paulo - Caderno Empregos*, 12 de dezembro, 2004, p. 2
- Fox, M. (1994), *The reinvention of work: A new vision of livelihood for our time*, Harper Collins, San Francisco
- Garcia-Zamor, J.-C., “Workplace spirituality in the United States and former East Germany”, in Giacalone, R.A., Jurkiewicz, C.L. (eds), *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational performance*, M. E. Sharpe, New York, 2003a, pp. 314-335
- Garcia-Zamor, J.-C., “Workplace spirituality and organizational performance”, *Public Administration Review*, 63(3), 2003b, pp. 355-363
- Gibbons, P., “Spirituality at work: definitions, measures, assumptions, and validity claims”, paper presented at the 2000 *Academy of Management*, Toronto
- Greene, W.E., Walls, G.D, Schrest, L.J., “Internal marketing the key to external marketing success”, *Journal of Services Marketing*, 8(4), 1994, pp. 5-13
- Grönroos, C. (1993), *Marketing, gerenciamento e serviços: A competição por serviços na hora da verdade*, 6ª edição, Editora Campus, Rio de Janeiro.
- Guia de Boa Cidadania Corporativa, “Atalho para a Excelência”, 2000, pp. 52-53
- Guia de Boa Cidadania Corporativa (2001), “Apoio à criança e ao adolescente”, p.190
- Guia de Boa Cidadania Corporativa (2002), “O respeito à diversidade no ambiente de trabalho é um dos marcos sociais da Serasa”, pp. 52-53
- Guia de Boa Cidadania Corporativa (2003), “Serasa é permitido passar cola”, pp. 48-49
- Guia de Boa Cidadania Corporativa (2004), “Conselhos aos mais velhos”, p. 140
- Guia de Boa Cidadania Corporativa (2005), “Todo apoio ao consumidor”, pp. 46-47
- Guia de Boa Cidadania Corporativa (2006), “Gestão para transformar”, pp. 48-49
- Guia Exame – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (1999), “Serasa”, p. 108
- Guia Exame – As 100 Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2000), “Serasa”, p. 156
- Guia Exame – As 100 Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2001), “Serasa”, p. 148
- Guia Exame – As 100 Melhores para Você Trabalhar e o Great Place to Work for Institute Brasil (2002), “Serasa”, p. 153
- Guia Exame – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar. (2003), “Serasa”, p. 184
- Guia Exame – Você S/A – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar. (2004), “Serasa”, p. 210
- Guia Exame – Você S/A – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar. (2005), “Serasa”, pp. 52-53
- Guia Exame – Você S/A – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar. (2006), “Serasa”, pp. 68-69

Pursuing organizational spirituality: some lessons from a financial services corporation

- Guia Exame Sustentabilidade (2007), “Voluntariado de Resultados”, pp. 66-67
- Guia Exame Sustentabilidade (2008), “Oportunidades para todos”, pp. 72-73
- Guia Exame Sustentabilidade (2009), “Os bons (e os maus) pagadores”, pp. 84-85
- Guia Você S/A – Exame – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2007), “Serasa”, pp. 66-68
- Guia Você S/A – Exame – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2008), “Serasa”, pp. 98-100
- Guia Você S/A – Exame – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2009), “Serasa Experian”, p. 162
- Guia Você S/A – Exame – As Melhores para Você Trabalhar (2010), “Serasa Experian”, p. 171
- Guillory, W.A. (2001), *The living organization: Spirituality in the workplace*, 2nd ed., Innovations International, Salt Lake City
- Gull, G.A., Doh, J., “The ‘transmutation’ of the organization: toward a more spiritual workplace”, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 13(2), 2004, pp. 128-139
- Handy, C. (1999), *The hungry spirit: beyond the capitalism: A quest for purpose in the modern world*, Broadway books, New York
- Heaton, D.P., Schmidt-Wilk, J., Travis, F., “Constructs, methods, and measures for researching spirituality in organizations”, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 17(1), 2004, pp. 62-82
- Herzog, A.L., “Atalho para a excelência”, *Guia de Boa Cidadania Corporativa*, 2000, pp. 52-53
- Herzog, A.L., “A religião agora é outra”, *Exame*, No. 921, 2 de julho, 2008, pp. 86-87
- Hogan, L.S., “A framework for the practical application of spirituality at work”, in Biberman, J., Whitty, M.D. (eds.), *Work and spirit: A reader of new spiritual paradigms for organizations*, University of Scranton Press, Chicago, 2000, pp. 55-76
- Houston, D.J., Cartwright, K.E., “Spirituality in public service”, *Public Administration Review*, 67(1), 2007, pp. 88-102
- Howard, S., “A spiritual perspective on learning in the workplace”, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 17(3), 2002, pp. 230-242
- Ingersoll, R.E., “Spiritual wellness in the workplace”, in Giacalone, R.A., Jurkiewicz, C.L. (eds.), *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational performance*, M.E. Sharpe, New York, 2003, pp. 289-299
- Issa, T., Pick, D., “Aesthetics and spirituality in the Australian services sector”, *Management Research Review*, 33(7), 2010a, pp. 701-714
- Issa, T., Pick, D., “Ethical mindsets: an Australian study”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 96(4), 2010b, pp. 613-629
- Issa, T., Pick, D., “An interpretive mixed-methods analysis of ethics, spirituality and aesthetics in the Australian services sector”, *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 20(1), 2011, pp. 45-58
- Jurkiewicz, C.L., Giacalone, R.A., “A values framework for measuring the impact of workplace spirituality on organizational performance”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 49(2), 2004, pp. 129-142
- Kanter, R.M., “The corporate conduct continuum: From “do not harm” to “do lots of goods””, in Manz, C.C., Cameron, K.S., Manz, K.P., Marx, R.D. (eds.), *The virtuous organization: insights from some of the world’s leading management thinkers*, World Scientific Publishing, Hackensack, 2008, pp. 279-286
- Karakas, F., “New paradigms in organization development: Positivity, spirituality, and complexity”, *Organization Development Journal*, 27(1), 2009, pp. 11-26
- Karakas, F., “Spirituality and performance in organizations: A literature review”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 94(1), 2010, pp. 89-106

- Kolodinsky, R.W., Giacalone, R.A., Jurkiewicz, C.L., "Workplace values and outcomes: Exploring personal, organizational, and interactive workplace spirituality", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 81(2), 2008, pp. 465–480
- Korac-Kakabdhase, N., Kouzmin, A., Kakabdhase, A., "Spirituality and leadership praxis", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 17(3), 2002, pp. 165-182
- Kurth, K., "Spiritually renewing ourselves at work: Finding meaning through serving", in Giacalone, R.A., Jurkiewicz, C.L. (eds.), *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational performance*, M. E. Sharpe, New York, 2003, pp. 447-460
- Lawler, E.E., III. (1986), *High-involvement management*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Lawler, E.E., III. (2003), *Treat people right: How organizations and individuals can propel each other into a virtuous spiral of success*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco
- Lowe, J., "Trust: the invaluable asset", in Spears, L. (ed.) *Insights of Leadership*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1998, pp. 68-76
- Marques, J.F., "Removing the blinders: a phenomenological study of U.S. based MBA students' perception of spirituality in the workplace", *Journal of American Academy of Business*, 8(1), 2006a, pp. 55-61
- Marques, J.F., "The spiritual worker: an examination of the ripple effect that enhances quality of life in – and outside the work environment", *Journal of Management Development*, 25(9), 2006b, pp. 884-895
- Marques, J.F., "Spiritual performance from an organizational perspective: the Starbucks way", *Corporate Governance*, 8(3), 2007, pp. 248-257
- Marques, J., Dhiman, S., King, R., *Spirituality in the workplace: What it is, Why it matters, How to make it works for you*, Personhood Press, Fawnskin, 2007
- Marschke, E.B., "A comparative study: Do corporations that embrace spirituality in the workplace encourage desired organizational outcomes?", Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, 2008
- McKee, D., "Spirituality and marketing: an overview of the literature", in Giacalone, R.A., Jurkiewicz, C.L. (eds.), *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational performance*, M. E. Sharpe, New York, 2003, pp. 57-75
- Milliman, J., Czaplewski, A., Ferguson, J., "Workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes: an exploratory empirical assessment", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 16(4), 2003, pp. 426-447
- Milliman, J., Ferguson, J., Trickett, D., Condemni, B., "Spirit and community at Southwest Airlines: An investigation of a spiritual values-based model", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 12(3), 1999, pp. 221-233
- Mitroff, I.I., "Spirituality at work: the next major challenge in management", in Pauchant, T.C. (ed.), *Ethics and spirituality at work: Hopes and pitfalls of the search for meaning in organizations*, Quorum Books, Westport, 2002, pp. 35-44
- Mitroff, I.I., Denton, E. (1999a), *A spiritual audit of corporate America: A hard look at spirituality, religion, and values in the workplace*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco
- Mitroff, I.I., Denton, E., "A study of spirituality in the workplace", *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 40(4), 1999b, pp. 83-92
- Moore, T.W., Casper, W.J., "An examination of proxy measures of workplace spirituality: a profile model of multidimensional constructs", *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 12(4), 2006, pp. 109-118
- Natale, S.M., Sora, S.A., "Ethics in strategic thinking: Business processes and the global market collapse", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 94(3), 2010, pp. 309-316

Pursuing organizational spirituality: some lessons from a financial services corporation

- Neal, J., Biberman, J., "Research that matters: Helping organizations integrate spiritual values and practices", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 17(1), 2004, pp. 7-10
- Oliveira, P.M., Limongi-França, A.C., "Avaliação da gestão de programas de qualidade de vida no trabalho", *RAE-eletrônica* (on line), 4(1), available at: <http://www.rae.com.br/elettronica/index.cfm?FuseAction=Artigo&ID=2209&Secao=ARTIGOS&Volume=4&Numero=1&Ano=2005>
- Ouimet, J.-R., "Reconciling human happiness and profitability: Mission possible thanks to sixteen new management tools", in Pauchant, T.C. (ed.), *Ethics and spirituality at work: Hopes and pitfalls of the search for meaning in organizations*, Quorum Books, Westport, 2002, pp. 77-88
- Pauchant, T.C., "Introduction: ethical and spiritual management addresses the need for meaning in the workplace", in Pauchant, T.C. (ed.), *Ethics and spirituality at work: Hopes and pitfalls of the search for meaning in organizations*, Quorum Books, Westport, 2002, pp. 1-27
- Pavlovich, K., Corner, P.D., "Spiritual organizations and connectedness: The living Nature experience", *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*, 6(3), 2009, pp. 209-229
- Pfeffer, J., "Business and the spirit: management practices that sustain values", in Giacalone, R.A., Jurkiewicz, C.L. (eds.), *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational performance*, M. E. Sharpe, New York, 2003, pp. 29-45
- Pin, L.H., Yoau-Chau, J., Min, L.H., Ming-Chia, C., Dao, M., "Workplace spirituality of oriental culture view", *The Business Review*, 14(2), 2010, pp. 161-167
- Prêmios Serasa Experian, "Prêmios 2005", available at: http://www.serasaexperian.com.br/serasaexperian/institucional/premios/premios_2005.htm (accessed 29 June 2011)
- Quatro, S.A., "Organizational spiritual normativity as an influence on organizational culture and performance in Fortune 500 firms", Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Iowa State University, 2002
- Rafiq, M., Ahmed, P.K., "Advances in the internal marketing concept: Definition, synthesis and extension", *The Journal of Services Marketing*, 14(6), 2000, pp. 449-463
- Rego, A., Cunha, M.P., Souto, S., "Espiritualidade nas organizações e comprometimento organizacional", *RAE-eletrônica* (on line), 6(2), available at: <http://www.rae.com.br/elettronica/index.cfm?FuseAction=Artigo&ID=3840&Secao=ARTIGOS&Volume=6&Numero=2&Ano=2007>
- Rego, A., Cunha, M.P., "Workplace spirituality and organizational commitment: an empirical study", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 21(1), 2008, pp. 53-75
- Sasser, W.E., Arbeit, S.F., "Selling jobs in the service sector", *Business Horizons*, June, 1976, pp. 61-62
- Segalla, A., "Obsessão pela alegria", *Época – As 100 Melhores Empresas para Trabalhar*, No. 484, 27 de agosto, 2007, pp. 126-128
- Sekeff, G., "Por que ela é a melhor", *Época – As 100 Melhores Empresas para Trabalhar*, No. 431, 21 de agosto, 2006, pp. 64-74
- Serasa Experian., "Serasa Experian – O Maior Bureau de Crédito da América Latina", available at: <http://www.serasaexperian.com.br/serasaexperian/index.htm> (accessed 29 June 2011), 2011a
- Serasa Experian., "Conduta com Profissionais", available at: http://www.serasaexperian.com.br/serasaexperian/institucional/conduta/conduta_profissionais.htm (accessed 29 June 2011), (2011b)

- Shipka, B., "Relieving spiritual poverty in our corporations", in Harman, W., Porter, M. (eds.), *The new business of business: sharing responsibility for a positive global future*, Berret-Koehler, San Francisco, 1997, pp. 201-210
- Silveira, M., "Aprovados pelos próprios funcionários", *Época*, No. 640, 23 de agosto, 2010, pp. 100-122
- Sirota, D., Mischkind, L.A., Meltzer, M.I. (2005), *The enthusiastic employee: How companies profit by giving workers what they want*, Wharton School Publishing, Upper Saddle River
- Social Serasa, "Partner Institutions", available at:
http://www.serasa.com.br/us/cidadania/serasasocial/serasasocial_instparc.htm (accessed 26 November 2008)
- Social Serasa, "Volunteers", available at:
http://www.serasa.com.br/us/cidadania/serasasocial/serasasocial_voluntarios.htm (accessed 12 September 2009)
- Souto, S. de O., Rego, J.A., "Espiritualidade nas organizações, positividade e desempenho", paper presented at Encontro Anual da Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação em Administração, ANPAD, Salvador, BA, 2006
- Spreitzer, G.M., Sonenshein, S., "Positive deviance and extraordinary organizing", in Cameron, K.S., Dutton, J.E. and Quinn, R.E. (eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship*, 2003, pp. 207-224, Berret-Koehler, San Francisco
- Spreitzer, G.M., Sonenshein, S., "Toward the construct definition of positive deviance", *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 47, No. 6, 2004, pp. 828-847
- Tansuhaj, P., Randall, D., McCullough, J., "Applying the internal marketing concept within large organizations: As applied to a Credit Union", *Journal of Professional Services Marketing*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1991, pp. 193-202
- Todd, P.R., "Corporate social responsibility and global standardization: Sustainable environmental management in the chemical industry", *Management & Marketing*, Vol. 4, No.1, 2009, pp. 3-16
- Varey, R.J., "Internal marketing: A review and some interdisciplinary research challenges", *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1995, pp. 40-63
- Vasconcelos, A.F. (2008a), *Espiritualidade no ambiente de trabalho: Dimensões, reflexões e desafios*, Editora Atlas, São Paulo
- Vasconcelos, A.F., "Broadening even more the internal marketing concept", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 42, No. 11/12, 2008b, pp. 1246-1264
- Vasconcelos, A.F., "Spiritual development in organizations: A religious-based approach", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 93, No 4, 2010, pp. 607-622
- Vasconcelos, A.F., "Societal marketing concept and spirituality in the workplace theory: Finding the common ground", *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2011a, pp. 97-116
- Vasconcelos, A.F., "Internal demarketing: Concept, research propositions, and managerial implications", *Marketing & Management*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2011b, pp. 35-58
- Wagner-Marsh, F., Conley, J., "The fourth wave: the spiritually-based firm", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1999, pp. 292-301
- Yin, R.K. (1989), *Case study research: Design and methods*, Sage Publications, Newbury Park